



# **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS**

**FOR**

## **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

associated with the

### **Downtown Gastonia Conference Center and Multi-Level Parking Deck in Gastonia, North Carolina**

**February 18, 2015**



## **I. Introduction**

The City of Gastonia, N.C. (City) is soliciting and accepting qualifications / proposals from interested and qualified management firms for overall management of the Gastonia Conference Center and adjoining multi-level Parking Deck Facility in Downtown Gastonia. The objective of this request is to provide the City with qualified respondents capable of carrying out the services described herein. The subsequent respondents' submissions will form the basis for evaluation and selection.

## **II. Background / Overview**

Gastonia Conference Center is a symbol; a sign of the people of Gastonia on the move toward civic, economic, and environmental sustainability. Designed to pay homage to the surrounding architecture and heritage of the area, Gastonia Conference Center is the premier destination for conferences and events, from corporate meetings to local and community events to memorable weddings.

This cutting-edge, 30,000-square-foot Conference Center is designed to generate business to the local Gastonia community. The outstanding and contemporary community-based project drives the resurgence of the downtown area through a stabilized economy, strengthened educational awareness, support of the local business community, and preservation of the environment through careful stewardship and sustainability.

This iconic two-story facility can accommodate over 450 meeting attendees or over 350 guests for a seated banquet function. It features ten separate, purpose-built and distraction-free meeting rooms, event spaces and a 5,100 square-foot ballroom.

As a municipally owned facility, Gastonia Conference Center generates sustainable jobs that continue to support the local community. The facility provides a positive economic impact for the community and supports local businesses, restaurants, and hotels. The entire facility is an integral part of the ongoing revitalization of Gastonia's historic downtown area that creates and supports a renewed sense of community. The Conference Center also has a positive impact on the community's economic vitality through the retention of dollars within the community and supporting and preserving small locally owned business.



### III. Scope of Service

The City of Gastonia invites all interested and qualified property management firms to submit qualifications/proposal statements for management of the Gastonia Conference Center and Parking Deck in Downtown Gastonia. **It is the intent of the City that the hiring of a management firm will not result in the private business use of the Conference Center under Section 141(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and applicable regulations, and that any contract with a management firm would comply in all respects with the requirements of Rev. Proc. 97-13, 1997-1 C.B. 632, for permissible qualified management contracts, and any management contract would be so construed in order to qualify.**

The management firm selected will be responsible for the successful supervision and control of all facets of operation of the Conference Center and adjoining parking deck. Specifically, the management firm will:

- Be responsible for the annual development and subsequent monthly maintenance of the overall Operational Budget (with submittal made annually to the City for approval).
- Perform all routine maintenance and upkeep as necessary for the appearance and operation of the Conference Center.
- Develop conference and meeting room rental rate schedules and solely manage bookings and scheduling.
- Formulate credit policies.
- Develop, implement and track success of marketing initiatives to attract local, regional and national customers to the Gastonia Conference Center.
- Promote and publicize the Gastonia Conference Center.
- Establish food and beverage services and manage food and beverage operations including receiving, storage and distribution.
- Maintain bank accounts including working capital accounts.



#### **IV. Submittal Requirements and Other Information**

The City invites all interested and qualified Management Firms to submit qualifications and proposals in accordance with the following requirements.

Responses should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward and concise description of the responder's experience and qualifications related to the operation and management of the Gastonia Conference Center. At a minimum, the following information should be included in the response to this RFQ/RFP. This outline is not all-inclusive and respondents can provide additional information as deemed appropriate.

In order to ensure a uniform review process and to obtain the maximum degree of comparability, the submissions in response to this RFQ/RFP should be organized in the following manner:

##### **General Information**

- Provide a transmittal letter that specifically states the responder understands the work to be accomplished and briefly outlines the responder's strengths in providing the required services. The letter should also state that responder meets or exceeds the minimum qualification criteria outlined herein. This letter should be signed by an authorized corporate officer for each entity included as a team proposal.
- Include the name for the responder's firm/entity, address, telephone number, and name of contact person for the RFQ/RFP. If the responder is a joint venture comprised of individual firms, list the names of the firms/entities, addresses, telephone numbers, and names of contact persons for the RFQ/RFP.
- Provide a table of contents that includes a clear identification of the written material by section and page number.
- Provide a description of the proposing entity's current legal status (i.e., Corporation, Partnership, Sole Proprietor, Joint Venture, etc.), along with the proposing entity's current Federal and State Identification Numbers.
- Proof of financial capability; if Responder's entity is currently in existence, provide financial statements for the past two (2) years of operation.
- References from past clients.



### **Firm Background and Qualifications**

- Provide a profile of your organization including principal officers and organizational structure. The responder must identify and distinguish between its own experience and qualifications and that of any parent entity, predecessor and/or wholly-owned or partially-owned subsidiary of the responder. Provide a copy of any organization profile, sales brochure and/or other documentary information pertaining to your organization.
- Provide resumes of key personnel and principals of the organization. Identify the extent to which each principal executive or staff member will be involved in the management of the Conference Center and whether such involvement will be on a fully informed daily basis or in an advisory capacity. Include a general organizational chart for the daily operation of the Conference Center with key personnel listed.
- Provide a complete and detailed history of your organization's facility management experience for the last seven (7) years. Information provided should include a description of services provided, examples of successful operational strategies and the term of the management contract.
- Provide documentation of your firm's financial capabilities and ability to adequately manage the basic expenses associated with management of the Conference Center. Include a plan for management of monthly payroll, maintenance and other daily expenses associated with operation of the Conference Center.
- A project summary from at least two (2) previous property management contracts, including 24-month budget, marketing plans, timelines and scope. Please include additional information for each project that would be helpful in evaluating your work.
- Note and explain any occasion where a contract with your firm to provide management services has not been renewed when renewing was an option in the contract in the past seven (7) years.
- Provide a list of all facilities managed by your organization on behalf of a public entity. Include each facility's name, address, size, and its primary intended use. Provide an explanation of your entity's experience in working with public entities



and other entities that market facilities for a public entity, including cooperative efforts.

- Provide examples of non-sporting events your organization has booked at facilities similar to the Conference Center, indicating the name of the event(s), where and when the event(s), occurred, and the event(s) attendance. Using specific examples, explain how your organization has effectively booked successful events that would be similar to those at the Conference Center.

### **Operational Plan**

- A statement of the firm's philosophy, visions and guiding principles.
- Detailed description of your approach to managing the Gastonia Conference Center. Include viewed strengths and assets, as well as obstacles and how those would be addressed. Include philosophies and strategies on the use of in-house food preparation versus the use of caterers and other outside vendors.
- An overview of the plan for transitioning from the existing management to your organization, including key steps, a timeline of critical milestones and a description of roles and responsibilities.
- A suggested management organizational chart for key management of the Conference Center, including positions at the corporate and local levels.
- Description of the reporting structure between facility management and your corporate offices and to the City.
- Description of the resident management personnel that could be assigned to the Conference Center.
- Actual examples of management/financial reports used by your organization to advise governmental entities of performance.

### **Financial Plan**

- Summarize your proposed strategy for minimizing the annual operating expenses and maximizing the annual operating revenues of the Conference Center.



- Understanding that the City will be financially responsible for and will have final approval of capital improvements and that Article 8 of Chapter 143, of the North Carolina General Statutes, entitled “Public Contracts” will be applicable to the letting of certain contracts, please provide a description of your entity’s role with respect to identifying and prioritizing capital improvements, including approval, billing, purchasing and letting of contracts.
- (A previous full year financial report for 2014 for operation of the Gastonia Conference Center is included for your reference. Previous management firm contract is available upon request.)

### **Booking Services**

Provide an explanation of the overall philosophy you would use to book/market the Conference Center, including:

- An overview of marketing and promotional concepts that will further the goals of the Conference Center as a premier venue and maximize the benefits of the Conference Center.
- Describing your approach to booking/scheduling, promoting, advertising and marketing events at the Conference Center. Include a draft marketing plan and describe your view of success for the Gastonia Conference Center.
- Describing past experience working with entities such as the Conference Center in marketing and booking events. Describe how event scheduling and promoting will be coordinated. Include a summary of experience working with standard industry booking software.
- Identifying any competing facilities managed/booked by your organization, including any facilities in the States of North and South Carolina, regardless of size, and any facilities anywhere in the United States that are of such a size or in such market as to compete with the Conference Center for booking events. Present a plan for preventing any conflict of interest in managing competing facilities.



### **Compensation Proposal**

Provide an outline of a potential compensation proposal that you may be willing to enter into if selected to provide Management and Operation Services for the Conference Center. **Any potential compensation proposal must not result in the private business use of the Conference Center under Section 141(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and applicable regulations, and must comply in all respects with the requirements of Rev. Proc. 97-13, 1997-1 C.B. 632, for permissible qualified management contracts, and any management contract would be so construed in order to qualify.**

### **V. Submittal Deadlines**

Interested Management Firms should submit a fully completed RFQ/RFP as outlined herein no later than 5:00 p.m. on ~~March 31, 2015~~ **Tuesday, April 14**. Please provide a minimum of five (5) bound copies and one (1) accompanying CD or other electronic copy, submitted to:

Ms. Kristy Crisp, Business Services Manager  
City of Gastonia  
P.O. Box 1748  
1300 N. Broad Street (physical address)  
Gastonia, North Carolina 28053-1748

Each respondent is responsible for the timely delivery of its proposal package. No proposal will be accepted after the deadline noted above. Accordingly, any submittals received after this time will be returned to the Sender. The City reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposals for any reason without any liability to any proponent or to waive any irregularities at their discretion.

### **VI. Evaluation Criteria**

Proposal packages will be evaluated based on the firm's ability to meet the requirements in this RFQ/RFP. Specific evaluation criteria will include:

- The firm's experience in successful conference center management.
- The firm's vision for the Gastonia Conference Center.
- Qualifications of the key individuals assigned to the local management team.



- The firm’s financial capability to manage the Gastonia Conference Center.
- References.
- Overall Proposal and other qualifications as applicable.

## **VII. Contact Information**

Any questions should be directed to Ms. Kristy Crisp of the City of Gastonia at 704-842-5105 or via email at [kristyc@cityofgastonia.com](mailto:kristyc@cityofgastonia.com).

## **VIII. Additional Information**

**Public Records:** Upon receipt by the City, all proposal packages are considered a public record except for material that qualifies as “Trade Secret” information under North Carolina General Statute 66-152.

**Clarification of Submittal:** The City reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a firm’s proposal or to obtain additional information.

**Conditions and Reservations:** The City reserves the right to reject any and all responses to the RFQ/RFP, or to accept any RFQ/RFP response deemed to be in the best interest of the City. The City reserves the right to waive technicalities and informalities.

A response to this RFQ/RFP should not be construed as a contract, nor indicate a commitment of any kind by the City. The response does not commit the City to pay for costs incurred in the submission of a response to this RFQ/RFP or for any cost incurred prior to the execution of a final contract. No recommendations or conclusions from this process concerning your firm shall constitute a right (property or otherwise) under the Constitution of the United States or under the Constitution, case law, or statutory law of North Carolina. Neither binding contract, obligation to negotiate, nor any other obligation shall be created on the part of the City unless the City and your firm execute a contract.